

ERICSSON'S LATEST.

A Novel Torpedo-Boat That Can Sink the Greatest of Ironclads.
New York World.

A successful trial of Capt. Ericsson's torpedo-boat destroyer took place at the navy-yard yesterday. The strong tide of the ordnance dock compelled a change of plan, and the target, a square frame covered with iron netting, was successfully placed in the Cove. The Destroyer was made fast to the old Constitution. The target was submerged 300 yards away. Everything being in readiness, Mr. Larroe, the representative of the Delamater Iron Works, the builders of the Destroyer, notified Capt. Selfridge and commanders Phythian and Crowninshield, the board appointed to examine the tests. At 3 o'clock the signal was given, and a gun was fired. There was but a slight report, and all that could be noticed from the outside was a trifling disturbance of the waters under the bow of the vessel. Almost instantly the portion of the target which was above the water was seen to vibrate, and a second later the projectile, a wooden log fifteen feet long, leaped from the water some 300 yards beyond the target, with a motion exactly similar to that of a porpoise playing under the bows of a ship at sea. From this point it ricocheted along the surface of the water for some 200 yards further before it lost its momentum. The target having been raised, it was found that the netting had been pierced almost exactly in the center and about five feet under water. The officers pronounced this trial eminently successful and ordered another for this morning at 9 o'clock. The Destroyer is an iron boat with hull almost entirely submerged. Upon this hull, placed well aft, is a deck-house of sheet-iron. The hull is 100 feet long, twelve feet wide, and eleven feet deep. She is a double-end, and is propelled by an engine of 1,000 horse-power. The steering apparatus and the torpedo gun—in fact all of her effective appointments—are below the water-level. The armament consists of a single gun placed just above the keelson in the forward part of the boat, its muzzle opening directly into the water, which is excluded from it by a permanent valve hung by an elbow joint to the stem and opened or closed by a piston operated at the breech of the gun. When the gun is to be fired the valve is raised out of the path of the projectile, and its place is taken by a temporary valve of wood and rubber cloth, which fits the muzzle tightly, and is placed in the gun after it is loaded. This is shattered when the gun is fired. As the projectile leaves the muzzle the permanent valve again comes in position, the little water that rushes in runs through the breech to the bilge and in pumped out by a steam siphon. The torpedo which it is proposed to use in actual warfare is a chamber of iron or copper, large enough to contain 340 pounds of dynamite, and it is claimed that against this little vessel the most powerful ironclads will be helpless, as the submerged gun will penetrate them beneath their armor and her great speed and facility of maneuvering would enable her to get in her work among a fleet of big ships almost at will, and with entire safety.

Ho! for California!

From the N. O. Times-Democrat, Dec. 30.

To-day the first through train leaves San Francisco for New Orleans. It has a long journey ahead of it, over alkali deserts and through lands where the population is made up chiefly of cactus and Indians. It will be over a week before we see these visitors from the Pacific Slope steaming into our city with all the products of another world. Then, indeed, must we recognize the fact of the completion of this great Southern Transcontinental Route. That route has been an accomplished fact for over a month, but the departure of today's train is the best practical evidence we have had of it.

This city has the greatest possibilities offered it in this newly opened field. No railroad in the world can compare with this Southern and Texas Pacific in promise. It is the shortest all-rail route in the United States, between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. It is shorter by 600 to 800 miles than the New York route; free from snow and ice, free from trouble from the Indians. It shortens the distance for grain between California and Europe, 10,000 miles, and allows its transportation across the continent by rail, which the Central Pacific route can never do. In addition to this, it traverses nearly 1,000 miles of Texas, running through a rich country, which it will help to build up; and penetrates the most promising mineral districts of New Mexico and Arizona. By this route, therefore, this city has a chance of securing the grain and fruit trade of California, the tea trade of China, the greater portion of the business of Northern Texas and the return trade of all these sections. We have advantages over every city in the world in securing this business. It will not come to us, however, voluntarily; no trade ever does. We are simply offered a chance to step in and win it, and are given greater opportunities than any other commercial city. It remains for our merchants to utilize these opportunities, and to make New Orleans commercially, as it is practically, the terminus of the Southern Pacific road, and the shipping port for all the produce, not only of the Pacific slope, but

of all those countries that border the Pacific Ocean. And in honor of the first through train let us wish success to this scheme, and that the bond now existing between New Orleans and San Francisco shall be always as strong as the present ties of iron make it.

Improved Cotton-Planter.

Cotton is commonly planted by hand or horse-power machines in drills, and when the plants are up a portion in each row is destroyed, leaving the rest to stand at regular distances apart from each other. This system involves a loss of seeds, young plants, and much labor. A horse-power planter, first used in planting corn in the hill, was shown at the exhibition as adapted to planting cotton seed at a certain fixed distance in a row, thus saving the labor of removing the plants not needed. The machine consists essentially of a box or hopper for holding the seed, a simple device for opening the ground, and a simple mechanism for containing the seeds and dropping one or more at fixed distances in the furrow. In the hopper containing the seed is a small wheel, intended to revolve on a horizontal axis in such a position that it will be about half-buried in loose seeds. On the rim of the wheel are a number of buckets or cups, each intended to hold one seed. In connection with each cup is a grip, or pawl, that by its weight drops over the cup and keeps the seed in place. As this wheel is turned, by suitable connections with the wheels of the machine as it moves over the ground, each seed is carried over the top and dropped into a spout. The grip lets go its hold at the right instant, and thus the seeds are dropped one at a time, each revolution of the wheel delivering a fixed number of seeds over a known space of ground. The spout delivers the seed to the drill just behind the cutter that opens the ground, and it is then covered by the broad tread of one of the wheels of the machine. In this spout there is also a valve, that may be controlled by a boy riding on the machine, or by a simple mechanical device that opens and closes the valve at regular intervals. It is easy to see that in such a machine it is possible to both count the seeds and to place one or any number in a hill, at any desired distance. A change in the gearing alters the spacing in the drill, and once fixed, it drops the seeds at regular distances apart, whatever the pace of the horse. Two styles of this machine were shown, one intended to be guided like a plow, and a larger machine, that plants two rows of seeds at the same time, on which the boy who tends the dropping device and the driver may ride.

Wise Sayings.

Gratitude is the throwing out of our hearts in the light of another's kindness.

Idea generate ideas, like a potato, which, cut in pieces, reproduces itself in a multiplied form.

Offense ask than decide questions. This is the way to better your knowledge. Your ears teach you, not your tongue.

There is nothing so easy as to be wise for others; a species of prodigality, by the way—for such wisdom is wholly wasted.

He that is taught to live upon little owes more to his father's wisdom than he that has a great deal left him does to his father's care.—Penn.

Things Worth Knowing.

That boiling water will remove tea stains and many fruit stains; pour the water through the stain, and thus prevent it from spreading over the fabric. That ripe tomatoes will remove ink and other stains; also from the hands. That a teaspoon-full of turpentine boiled with white clothes will aid the whitening process. That boiled starch is much improved by the addition of a little spermaceti or a little salt, or both, or a little gum-arabic dissolved. That beeswax and salt make flat-irons as clean and smooth as glass; tie a lump of wax in a rag and keep it for that purpose; when the irons are hot, rub them with the wax rag, then scour with a paper or rag sprinkled with salt. That kerosene will soften boots or shoes which have been hardened by water, and render them as pliable as when new. That kerosene will make tin teakettles as bright as new; saturate a woolen rag and rub with it.

No one ever heard of an Old Man's Christian Association, though a number of young men's associations are reported. Old men are generally sinners, and belong to bald-headed clubs where poker is the means of salvation.

The six healthiest cities in the United States are said to be in the order following: Knoxville, New Haven, Portland, San Francisco, Cleveland and Lawrence. The unhealthiest are Charleston, Memphis, Lynn, New York, and St. Louis. St. Petersburg is the unhealthiest city in the world. In New York the deaths exceed the births by 12,000 a year.

"Will you tell me," asked an old gentleman of a lady, "what Mrs. —'s maiden name was?" "Why her maiden aim was to get married, of course," exclaimed the lady.

A rustic spendthrift: The farmer that "ran rapidly through his property" wore a red shirt and had his bridle ball behind him.

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